

**PHYSICAL KEY SECURITY MANAGEMENT METHOD AND APPARATUS
FOR INFORMATION SYSTEMS**

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

An apparatus and a method for enabling the secure installation and use of an information system having a plurality of nodes, where the plurality of nodes include at least one information appliance (100) and at least one security console (200). The apparatus includes at least one data-carrying object, referred to as a "key" (301), that contains security-related data, and further includes at least one key receptacle (103, 203) that forms a portion of at least one of the nodes. The key is inserted into the receptacle for reading-out the security-related data for indicating to the information system a desired security configuration. The key is not intended to primarily establish the identity of a particular user or principal, but is instead intended to provide and be instrumental in defining, using a tangible medium, a security configuration that bestows a certain level of authorization or access to a particular user or principal.

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